



# **KING'S OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **September 2018**

**Policy prepared/reviewed by: Catherine Giles**

**Policy reviewed and approved by: James Cooper**

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**Date of next review: July 2019**

**This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment**

**King's Oak is a school at the heart of its community where the sense of wonder in each child is awakened, where each is valued as an individual and where gifts and talents are discovered and achievements are celebrated.**

At King's Oak Primary we believe that, in order for every pupil to fulfil their potential, excellent punctuality and attendance are essential. This helps to foster a love of learning and allows maximum academic progress to be made. We believe that poor punctuality and attendance can seriously affect a child's attainment, progress, enjoyment of school and ultimately their life chances. We also understand our responsibilities relating to CME (Children Missing Education) and that poor punctuality, poor attendance or patterns of poor attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding issues. We take the issue of poor punctuality and attendance very seriously and put a number of measures in place to support families.

The legal minimum attendance requirement for children of school age is 90%. Any child whose attendance falls below this is classed as a persistent absentee' and referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer. However, we consider anything under 95% as poor attendance. Although children below the age of 5 years are below statutory school age, excellent attendance at this age is encouraged as it nurtures good habits for the future. It is our expectation that, once allocated a place in our Nursery or Reception, parents/carers are committed to using it to the full despite their child being younger than statutory school age.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

- Medical appointments may be authorised although, wherever possible, these must be made outside school times.
- Days of religious observance may be authorised although the school may seek confirmation of this from the religious body concerned.
- Illness may be authorised although if there is reason to doubt genuine illness then medical evidence will be requested by the school in the form of prescriptions, appointment cards or letters from doctors/hospitals (in the case of longer term illness or periods of absence related to medical conditions, measures will be put into place to support learning at home).
- Requests for absence (other than illness or medical appointments) must be made, in advance, in writing to the Headteacher by the parent/carer.
- Absence for holiday during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher and governors will consider each case on an individual basis.
- Where absence (other than illness or medical appointments) has been authorised, the Headteacher will state in writing how many days are authorised and if the child is absent for more than the time stated by the Headteacher, those days will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Parents/carers should be aware that if a request for absence, or part of a request, has not been authorised but the time is taken despite this (or if absence is taken without

notifying the school in advance), they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (see below).

- If a child is on a fixed term exclusion of more than 5 days it is a legal requirement that we provide work for the child to do at home. If a child is excluded for any amount of time, it is our policy that we will provide work for that child to do at home so that their education is disrupted as little as possible.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Fixed Penalty Notices can be used in the following specific circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in any five week period, including persistent unauthorised absence and unauthorised holidays in term-time.
- Unauthorised delayed return from extended holidays.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) equivalent to 10 sessions in any five week period.

There are two levels of penalty notice:

- £60 fine, per resident 'parent' per child, if paid within 21 days.
- £120 fine, per resident 'parent' per child, if paid later than 21 but within 28 days.

The Local Authority collects the payment. Parents/carers can be prosecuted by the Local Authority if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made.

There is no right to appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. If parents/carers believe that a Fixed Penalty Notice has been issued in error, they should contact the school immediately on receiving the Fixed Penalty Notice.

Consideration will be given to payment options (e.g. payment plan) where there is evidence that parents/carers face financial hardship.

### **Punctuality**

- Children (and their parents/carers) are encouraged to be on time each day so that children are ready to start learning as soon as school begins.
- All staff will model excellent punctuality and praise children for good punctuality.
- If children arrive late, they are required to sign in at the school office and will be registered 'L'.
- If children arrive after 9:20 a.m. the session is recorded as an unauthorised absence on SIMS and will have an effect on a child's attendance level. The child will be registered 'U'.
- In the case that a child arrives late due to a medical appointment they will be registered as 'M' - an authorised code. (Evidence of the appointment may be requested.)

- All reasons given for lateness are monitored, followed up by the designated member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where there are concerns and reported to the Child Protection Officer (CPO) where there may be safeguarding issues.
- Persistent poor punctuality or patterns of poor punctuality are reported to the CPO and EWO and parents may be requested to attend a meeting at school to discuss reasons for persistent lateness.
- We offer support for families to support excellent punctuality.

### **Punctuality at the end of the school day/session**

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day/session. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies.

### **Promoting excellent attendance**

- All staff will model excellent attendance.
- All staff will praise children for good attendance and encourage children to attend school.

### **Tackling poor attendance**

First and foremost, we focus on building strong relationships with pupils and families so that trust is established and honest communication and support can take place.

- If a child is absent from school it is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform the school via the absence phone line. Messages should include details of the child's illness or specific reason for absence.
- If a message is not received by 10:00 a.m. or no reason is given, our Attendance Officer will contact the parents/carers to find out why and this will be recorded on SIMS.
- If any absence or a child's % attendance raises safeguarding concerns, the Attendance Officer will inform the CPO immediately and the CPO will follow procedures, liaising with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), outside agencies and social care, as appropriate.
- When a child's absence level falls below 95%, the parent/carer will be invited to a School Attendance Meeting, to discuss barriers to attendance and whether additional support is required by the family.
- Parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence for all future absences.
- If there are further unauthorised absences, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will write to inform the parent/carer that their child is at risk of Persistent Absence. A further school attendance meeting will be offered.
- If a child's attendance dips below the legal minimum of 90% they are classed as a persistent absentee. The EWO will write a Persistent Absence monitoring letter informing the parent that their child's attendance is now being formally monitored and continued unauthorised absences will result in a Legal Attendance Meeting.

- If a child has unauthorised absences during the monitoring period the parent/carer will be invited to a Legal Attendance Meeting. This is chaired by the Family and Youth Support Manager and attended by the EWO and a member of school SLT. A First Court Warning may be issued at this meeting.
- Support from school for parents/carers/families to improve attendance may include:
  - daily contact, weekly meetings
  - helping to arrange alternative transport
  - Inside play provision for break and lunch
  - reward charts/personalised targets for children
  - sign posting to other professionals who can help

### **Tackling poor attendance for children under school age**

- If a child's attendance is poor, in the first instance the class teacher will speak to the parent/carer and stress the importance of their child having regular attendance at this crucial stage of development. Support will be offered to improve attendance.
- The CPO will be informed if there may be safeguarding concerns and will follow procedures, liaising with outside agencies and social care, as appropriate.
- If a child's attendance dips below 95%, the Attendance Officer will send a letter to inform parents/carers that this has happened and explain the importance of excellent attendance for children, despite them being below school age.
- If there is no improvement, the EWO will send a letter to explain the possible consequences for poor attendance when a child becomes of legal school age.
- If poor attendance persists, a member of SLT will contact the parents/carers to discuss the reasons and to offer support.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

#### **The Attendance Officer will:**

- Monitor children's absence and their patterns of absence, together with any reasons for absence given (this is recorded on SIMS), and inform the CPO where there may be safeguarding concerns.
- Monitor, daily, the attendance of all children around whom there are existing safeguarding concerns and inform the CPO immediately should one of these children be absent.
- Start child missing in education procedures by making reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers, friends and wider family, if after three days of absence a child has not been seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers.
- According to the school's legal duty, report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 5 consecutive days to the Local Authority Single Point of Access. Education Welfare staff will visit the last known address and make all necessary checks.

- Inform the CPO and designated member of SLT if a child whose parent/carer routinely and promptly notifies school of any absence is absent without reason and parents/carers or emergency contacts cannot be contacted, so that a home visit can be considered.
- Monitor children whose attendance is below 95% and 90% and send letters to these parents/carers.
- Meet with the designated member of SLT and EWO weekly to discuss attendance.
- Provide weekly attendance figures for the school newsletter
- Provide attendance data for pupils' school annual reports.

The Admissions Officer will liaise with the Attendance Officer and, taking account of DfE guidance:

- Contact the Local Authority EWO if a child who is due to start school fails to arrive on the first day.
- If a child who has had an authorised absence fails to return to school on the day expected.
- Inform the Local Authority EWO before taking any pupil off roll in all cases where we have not received a verified request from a subsequent school for the child's CTF (Common Transfer File) and keep a record of this.
- Notify the Local Authority EWO within 5 days of adding a pupil to the admission register if s/he joins the school at any point after standard admission point to Nursery (unless admission of the pupil has been notified to the school by the LA) with full details as contained in SIMS.

The designated member of SLT will:

- Meet with the Attendance Officer weekly to discuss attendance.
- Meet with the EWO weekly or fortnightly to discuss attendance.
- Liaise with the CPO as necessary.
- Contact and remain in contact with parents/carers whose children's attendance dips below 92% and has not improved after the initial letter sent.
- Meet and remain in contact with parents/carers whose children's attendance is below 90%.
- Keep informal records of all discussions with parents/carers relating to attendance
- Attend PAP meetings when required.
- Report to the Headteacher (ongoing), the governors (termly report) and the School Improvement Partner (SIP) (termly report).
- Hold half termly assemblies to reward children with 100% attendance.
- Communicate with class teachers about children in their class whose attendance is poor detailing discussions that have taken place, support that has been put in place, what they can do to support etc.

- Analyse data on attendance and absence broken down by group and cohort, identifying patterns of absence and planning effective ways of addressing this for groups of pupils, reporting to the Governing Body.
- Set attendance targets.

#### The Education Welfare Officer will:

- Meet with the designated member of SLT and the Attendance Officer weekly or fortnightly.
  - Send letters home to parents/carers whose children's attendance is under 95%.
  - Contact and meet with parents/carers whose children's attendance is 95% or under and does not improve.
  - Make home visits.
  - Attend LAM meetings.
- Liaise with the CPO.

#### Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants will:

- Model excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure all pupils are registered accurately.
- Alert the Attendance Officer or designated member of SLT if they notice patterns of poor attendance or punctuality, if a child is absent and they are not aware of the reason for absence or are concerned about a child's attendance.
- Alert the CPO if they have concerns relating to safeguarding.
- Encourage excellent attendance for children in their class by discussing the importance of this, praising improvement in attendance, giving rewards for improved attendance, competing for the 'best attendance' class award each week and term.
- Talk to parents/carers when children have been absent and/or at parents' evenings, to stress the importance of good attendance, and the relation between attendance and attainment.
- Ensure any pupil who has been absent for a significant period of time is provided with the support required to catch up on missed work.

#### The Headteacher will:

- Liaise with the CPO where absence/%attendance raises safeguarding concerns.
- Report on attendance to the governors and the SIP along with the designated member of SLT.
- Decide whether individual cases of requested absence should be authorised or not, in line with school policy.

#### Parents/carers should:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring that their child attends school every day unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- Promote the importance of attendance with their children.
- Phone or come into school and meet with a member of staff if they are having difficulty getting their child to school or if their child is reluctant or refusing to come into school.
- Make medical appointments, wherever possible, outside school times .
- Make any requests for absence in writing to the Headteacher.
- Inform the school if their child is ill on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day on which their child is too ill to attend school.
- Provide medical evidence if required by the EWO.
- Inform the school of the reasons for any absence, on the first day of absence.
- Ensure we always have up-to-date contact numbers for at least two responsible adults.
- Be aware of the legal requirements and the school's policy on attendance and be able to access it from the school or on the school's website.

We hope that through this policy, parents/carers, children and staff can work together to improve attendance and achieve the target of all pupils being at school 100% of the time.